AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. **(Currently Amended)** Dried porous crumbs of a hydrogenated block copolymer which is obtained by hydrogenating a block copolymer comprising (a) at least one polymer block composed mainly of aromatic vinyl monomer units and (b) at least one polymer block composed mainly of conjugated diene monomer units, said hydrogenated block copolymer having a molecular weight of 70,000 or more,

said dried porous crumbs having a water content of 1 % by weight or less and having an oil-absorbing capability of 1.0 or more, as determined by a method comprising immersing 10 g of the dried porous crumbs in 1 liter or more of a paraffin process oil at 25 °C under atmospheric pressure for 1 minute, taking out the resultant oil-containing porous crumbs from the oil, introducing the crumbs into a centrifugal separator and treating the oil-containing porous crumbs under 1,000 G for 3 minutes to thereby separate the oil adhering to the crumbs from the crumbs, taking out the crumbs from the centrifugal separator, measuring the weight of the crumbs and calculating the oil-absorbing capability of the dried porous crumbs by the following formula:

Oil-absorbing capability = {(the weight of the oil-containing porous crumbs after the centrifugation) - (the weight of the dried porous crumbs before the immersion in the oil)} / (the weight of the dried porous crumbs before the immersion in the oil), and

said dried porous crumbs having an average pore diameter of from 9.7 to 20 μm.

2. **(Currently Amended)** A method for producing dried porous crumbs of a hydrogenated block copolymer, said dried porous crumbs having a water content of 1 % by weight or less,

which comprises the steps of:

(1) providing an organic solvent solution of a hydrogenated block copolymer which is obtained by hydrogenating a block copolymer comprising (a) at least one polymer block composed mainly of aromatic vinyl monomer units and (b) at least one polymer block composed mainly of conjugated diene monomer units, said hydrogenated block copolymer having a molecular weight of 70,000 or more,

(2) removing said organic solvent from said solution by steam stripping, thereby obtaining an aqueous slurry containing wet porous crumbs of said hydrogenated block copolymer,

(3) subjecting said aqueous slurry to gravity dehydration or filtration dehydration to remove water from said slurry, thereby dehydrating said wet porous crumbs to an extent that the water content of the wet porous crumbs is in the range of from greater than 20 % to 90 % by weight, wherein the removal of water from said slurry is performed without using a mechanical compression type dehydrator <u>or a centrifugal dehydrator</u>, and

(4) exposing the resultant dehydrated wet porous crumbs to hot air in a hot-air dryer having a thermal conduction type heating means or having no thermal conduction type heating means, to thereby dry said dehydrated wet porous crumbs,

wherein the temperature of the hot air in said hot-air dryer satisfies the following relationship:

$$80 \leq t_1 \leq 1.5 \times Mw/10^4 + 155,$$

wherein t_1 represents the temperature (°C) of the hot air in said hot-air dryer and Mw represents the molecular weight of said hydrogenated block copolymer, and

wherein when said hot-air dryer has a thermal conduction type heating means, the temperature of said thermal conduction type heating means satisfies the following relationship:

$$t_2 \leq 1.5 \times Mw/10^4 + 135,$$

wherein t_2 represents the temperature (°C) of said thermal conduction type heating means and Mw is as defined above.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein said wet porous crumbs obtained in said step (2) have a particle size distribution wherein the amount of those crumbs which do not pass through a 2-mesh screen is 40 % by weight or less, based on the weight of the total mass of said wet porous crumbs, the amount of those crumbs which pass through a 30-mesh screen and do not pass through a 42-mesh screen is 50 % by weight or less, based on the weight of the total mass of said wet porous crumbs, and the amount of those crumbs which pass through a 42-mesh screen is 0.1 % by weight or less, based on the weight of the total mass of said wet porous crumbs.

4. (Original) The method according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said dehydrated wet porous crumbs obtained in said step (3) have a particle size distribution wherein the amount of those crumbs which pass through a 6-mesh screen and do not pass through a 42-mesh screen is 50 % by weight or more, based on the weight of the total mass of said dehydrated wet porous

crumbs.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 4, wherein said dehydrated wet porous crumbs obtained in said step (3) have a particle size distribution wherein the particle sizes of all of said dehydrated wet porous crumbs are within the range of from 50 to 150 % of the average particle size of said dehydrated wet porous crumbs.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein said hydrogenated block copolymer has a molecular weight of from 90,000 to 800,000.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein said hydrogenated block copolymer has a molecular weight of from 200,000 to 800,000.

8. (**Currently Amended**) The dried porous crumbs according to claim 1, which is produced by a method that comprises the steps of:

(1) providing an organic solvent solution of a hydrogenated block copolymer which is obtained by hydrogenating a block copolymer comprising (a) at least one polymer block composed mainly of aromatic vinyl monomer units and (b) at least one polymer block composed mainly of conjugated diene monomer units, said hydrogenated block copolymer having a molecular weight of 70,000 or more,

(2) removing said organic solvent from said solution by steam stripping, thereby obtaining an aqueous slurry containing wet porous crumbs of said hydrogenated block

copolymer,

(3) subjecting said aqueous slurry to gravity dehydration or filtration dehydration to remove water from said slurry, thereby dehydrating said wet porous crumbs to an extent that the water content of the wet porous crumbs is in the range of from greater than 20 % to 90 % by weight, wherein the removal of water from said slurry is performed without using a mechanical compression type dehydrator or a centrifugal dehydrator, and

(4) exposing the resultant dehydrated wet porous crumbs to hot air in a hot-air dryer having a thermal conduction type heating means or having no thermal conduction type heating means, to thereby dry said dehydrated wet porous crumbs,

wherein the temperature of the hot air in said hot-air dryer satisfies the following relationship:

$$80 \leq t_1 \leq 1.5 \times Mw/10^4 + 155,$$

wherein t_1 represents the temperature (°C) of the hot air in said hot-air dryer and Mw represents the molecular weight of said hydrogenated block copolymer, and

wherein when said hot-air dryer has a thermal conduction type heating means, the temperature of said thermal conduction type heating means satisfies the following relationship:

$$t_2 \leq 1.5 \times Mw/10^4 + 135,$$

wherein t_2 represents the temperature (°C) of said thermal conduction type heating means and Mw is as defined above.

9. **(New)** The dried porous crumbs according to either of claim 1 or claim 8, wherein the total volume of the pores having a size within a range of from 1.8 to 57 μm is 300 mm^3/g or more.

10. **(New)** The method according to claim 2, wherein the total volume of the pores having a size within a range of from 1.8 to 57 μm is 300 mm^3/g or more.